PITTA

Newsletter of Deccan Birders (formerly Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh)
New Series Volume 19 Number 9 August 2022

**FIELD TRIP: Sunday, 28th August 2022: Zaheerabad. Meeting Point: Mangatrai Pearls, Punjagutta, 4.15AM; BHEL Bus Stop, 4.45AM; Taj Dhaba, Muthangi, 5.00AM. Trip Coordinator(s): Sathwik Reddy (Mobile: 9985807186), Gokul Krishna Addanki (Mobile: 9945346585)**

Zaheerabad, close to Chincholi, is located near Telangana-Karnataka border. The forest hosts rich biodiversity. Apart from medicinal herbs and trees, species like Red Sanders and Sandalwood are found abundantly with adjoining social forest, and there is good dry and moist deciduous forest in the core with Acacia and Teak plantations on the fringes. The forest area is home to a variety of birds: we will look out for White-bellied Minivet, Small Minivet, Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Tree Pipit, Rain Quail, Jungle Bush Quail, Rock Bush Quail, Barred Buttonquail, Painted Francolin, Baya Weaver etc.

This will be a half-day trip. Carry water and breakfast/snacks, and rain gear if required. Strict Covid protocols will be followed, so please ensure you wear masks, carry a sanitiser and maintain social distancing. Members are requested to wear their Deccan Birders ID cards. Non-members are most welcome; however, they are requested to contribute Rs. 100/- per person to the Deccan Birders kitty. Deccan Birders T-Shirts and caps will be available for sale.

## Trip Report: Maguri Beel, Assam, March 27-28, 2022

Text and Photos: Aditya Rao

**A view of Maguri Beel**

Maguri Beel or Maguri Bill is a vast wetland close to Dibru-Saikhowa National Park near Matapung village in Tinsukia district in Assam. We spent 2 morning sessions in Maguri Beel on March 27 & 28, 2022, looking for grassland and wetland birds. This was part of an 8-day long trip to the North-east that included Dehing Patkai and Mishmi Hills, about which I will write a separate report later.

The area is extremely rich in avifauna and is well-known for two species: the Swamp Prinia, also known as Swamp Grass Babbler (IUCN status: Endangered) and the Swamp Francolin (IUCN status: Vulnerable). Unfortunately, we could not cross the river (rapids due to water let out from upstream) to see the Prinia which is only seen and spotted on some island grasslands. But we were lucky enough to spot the Swamp Francolin after waiting patiently for a few hours.

**Relative location of Maguri Beel**

**Swamp Francolin**

That said, the entire area is extremely diverse for avifauna and, given its proximity to foothills of the Himalayas, there are several migrants too that can be spotted during the winters.

**Ruddy Shelduck**

**Chestnut-capped Babbler**

**Striated Babbler**

We did get to see some very nice species, for instance Striated and Chestnut-capped Babblers, Siberian and Chinese Rubythroats, Striated Grassbird, Yellow-bellied Prinia, etc.

**Siberian Rubythroat**

**Chinese Rubythroat**

**Yellow-bellied Prinia**

Another very interesting sighting was a warbler that was identified on field as a possible Baikal Bush Warbler, though the identity still needs to be confirmed.

**Possible Baikal Bush Warbler**

Environmental degradation: Unfortunately, given that it is near Dibrugarh, and is a tea cultivation hotspot, every inch of the place is highly exploited. There are also natural gas reserves discovered here, given its proximity to Digboi, which make it extremely vulnerable. It is likely a matter of only a few years before these areas completely vanish & the biodiversity is lost.

**Spotted Bush Warbler**

The full list of birds seen during the trip is given below:

| Sl No | Species Name | Scientific Name | Sl No | Species Name | Scientific Name |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Indian Spot-billed Duck | *Anas poecilorhyncha* | 33 | Black-hooded Oriole | *Oriolus xanthornus* |
| 2 | Common Snipe | *Gallinago gallinago* | 34 | Black Redstart | *Phoenicurus ochruros* |
| 3 | Common Sandpiper | *Actitis hypoleucos* | 35 | Lesser Whistling-duck | *Dendrocygna javanica* |
| 4 | Wood Sandpiper | *Tringa glareola* | 36 | Ruddy Shelduck | *Tadorna ferruginea* |
| 5 | Asian Openbill | *Anastomus oscitans* | 37 | Swamp Francolin | *Ortygornis gularis* |
| 6 | Grey-backed Shrike | *Lanius tephronotus* | 38 | Rock Pigeon (Feral) | *Columba livia* |
| 7 | Eastern Jungle Crow | *Corvus levaillantii* | 39 | Spotted Dove | *Streptopelia chinensis* |
| 8 | Bengal Bushlark | *Mirafra assamica* | 40 | Lesser Coucal | *Centropus bengalensis* |
| 9 | Yellow-bellied Prinia | *Prinia flaviventris* | 41 | Indian Cuckoo | *Cuculus micropterus* |
| 10 | Red-whiskered Bulbul | *Pycnonotus jocosus* | 42 | Red-wattled Lapwing | *Vanellus indicus* |
| 11 | Yellow-browed Warbler | *Phylloscopus inornatus* | 43 | Pheasant-tailed Jacana | *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* |
| 12 | Chestnut-capped Babbler | *Timalia pileata* | 44 | Bronze-winged Jacana | *Metopidius indicus* |
| 13 | Jungle Myna | *Acridotheres fuscus* | 45 | Black Drongo | *Dicrurus macrocercus* |
| 14 | Siberian Stonechat | *Saxicola maurus* | 46 | Rufous Treepie | *Dendrocitta vagabunda* |
| 15 | Eastern Yellow Wagtail | *Motacilla tschutschensis* | 47 | Plain Prinia | *Prinia inornata* |
| 16 | Rosy Pipit | *Anthus roseatus* | 48 | Paddyfield Warbler | *Acrocephalus agricola* |
| 17 | Cinnamon Bittern | *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* | 49 | Spotted Bush Warbler | *Locustella thoracica* |
| 18 | Indian Pond Heron | *Ardeola grayii* | 50 | Striated Grassbird | *Megalurus palustris* |
| 19 | Oriental Pied Hornbill | *Anthracoceros albirostris* | 51 | Barn Swallow | *Hirundo rustica* |
| 20 | House Crow | *Corvus splendens* | 52 | Red-vented Bulbul | *Pycnonotus cafer* |
| 21 | Cinereous Tit | *Parus cinereus* | 53 | Dusky Warbler | *Phylloscopus fuscatus* |
| 22 | Common Tailorbird | *Orthotomus sutorius* | 54 | Striated Babbler | *Argya earlei* |
| 23 | Collared Scops Owl | *Otus lettia* | 55 | Asian Pied Starling | *Gracupica contra* |
| 24 | Brown Boobook | *Ninox scutulata* | 56 | Chestnut-tailed Starling | *Sturnia malabarica* |
| 25 | Little Grebe | *Tachybaptus ruficollis* | 57 | Common Myna | *Acridotheres tristis* |
| 26 | Green Imperial Pigeon | *Ducula aenea* | 58 | Siberian Rubythroat | *Calliope calliope* |
| 27 | White-breasted Waterhen | *Amaurornis phoenicurus* | 59 | Chinese Rubythroat | *Calliope tschebaiewi* |
| 28 | Little Cormorant | *Microcarbo niger* | 60 | Hodgson's Redstart | *Phoenicurus hodgsoni* |
| 29 | Grey Heron | *Ardea cinerea* | 61 | Chestnut Munia | *Lonchura atricapilla* |
| 30 | Little Egret | *Egretta garzetta* | 62 | Paddyfield Pipit | *Anthus rufulus* |
| 31 | Cattle Egret | *Bubulcus ibis* | 63 | Baikal Bush Warbler (ID not confirmed) | *Locustella davidi* |
| 32 | Blue-throated Barbet | *Psilopogon asiaticus* | | | |

Some other photos taken during the trip:

**Collared Scops Owl**

**Striated Grassbird**

**Hodgson's Redstart (female)**

**Siberian Stonechat**

**Chestnut Munia**

**Black Redstart (male)**

**Brown Boobook (aka Brown Hawk Owl)**

**Oriental Pied Hornbill**

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# Deccan Birders - Financial Statements FY 2021-22

| BALANCE SHEET AS AT MARCH 31, 2022 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **Note No.** | ***31-03-2022*** | ***31-03-2021*** |
| | | | | ` | ` |
| | | | | | |
| **I** | **LIABILITIES** | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | **1.** | **Society Funds** | | | |
| | | Capital Funds | 1 | ***18,94,350*** | 18,19,283 |
| | | | | ***18,94,350*** | 18,19,283 |
| | **2.** | **Current liabilities** | | | |
| | | Other Current Liabilities | 2 | ***33,300*** | 39,788 |
| | | | | ***33,300*** | 39,788 |
| | | **TOTAL** | | ***19,27,650*** | 18,59,071 |
| **II.** | **ASSETS** | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | **1.** | **Non Current Assets** | | | |
| | | Property, Plant and Equipment | 3 | ***6,244*** | 7,345 |
| | | | | | |
| | **2.** | **Current Assets** | | | |
| | | Inventories | 4 | ***8,150*** | 8,150 |
| | | Cash and Bank Balances | 5 | ***18,88,153*** | 18,31,601 |
| | | Short Term Loans and Advances | 6 | ***20,787*** | 11,975 |
| | | Other Current Assets | 7 | ***4,316*** | - |
| | | | | ***19,21,406*** | 18,51,726 |
| | | **TOTAL** | | ***19,27,650*** | 18,59,071 |

Per Our Report of Even Date

***For C K S ASSOCIATES***
***Chartered Accountants***
***FRN: 007390S***

**For and on Behalf of the Executive Committee**
**DECCAN BIRDERS**

***P GANAPATI RAO***
***Partner***
***M.No.024113***

***JVD Moorty***
***President***

***Krishna Nagarajan***
***Hon. Treasurer***

***Srikanth B***
***Hon. Secretary***

***Hyderabad***
***May 31, 2022***

| RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2022 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | **Cash** | **Canara Bank** | **Total** ` |
| | | | | | | |
| 1 | **Opening Balance** | | | 4,199 | 1,27,402 | 1,31,601 |
| | | | | | | |
| 2 | **Receipts during the year** | | | | | |
| | Life Membership Fees | | | - | 30,000 | 30,000 |
| | Annual Membership Fees | | | | 4,000 | 4,000 |
| | Student Membership Fees | | | - | 400 | 400 |
| | Interest received from Saving Bank | | | - | 3,696 | 3,696 |
| | Interest received-F.D | | | - | 79,595 | 79,595 |
| | Sale of Caps and T- Shirts | | | - | - | - |
| | Donations | | | - | - | - |
| | Fixed Deposit proceeds | | | - | - | - |
| | | | | **4,199** | **2,45,093** | **2,49,292** |
| 3 | **Payments during the year** | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | Audit Fees | | | - | 11,800 | 11,800 |
| | Bank Charges | | | - | 72 | 72 |
| | Post Box Charges | | | 150 | | 150 |
| | Postage & Courier | | | 315 | | 315 |
| | Printing and Stationery | | | 1,460 | | 1,460 |
| | Library Rent | | | - | | - |
| | Fixed Deposit - Canara Bank | | | - | | - |
| | Income Tax | | | - | 7,554 | 7,554 |
| | Outstanding Expenses | | | - | 39,788 | 39,788 |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | **1,925** | **59,214** | **61,139** |
| | | | | | | |
| 4 | **Closing Balance** | | | 2,274 | 1,85,879.42 | 1,88,153 |

***For C K S ASSOCIATES***

***Chartered Accountants***

***FRN: 007390S***

**For and on Behalf of the Executive Committee**
**DECCAN**
**BIRDERS**

**V.SRINATH**
**Partner**
**M.No.021185**

***JVD Moorty***
***President***

***Krishna Nagarajan***
***Hon. Treasurer***

***Srikanth B***
***Hon. Secretary***

**May 31, 2022**
**Place: Hyderabad**

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## Bird of the Month

Text and Photos: Umesh Mani

# Eurasian Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

**Eurasian Collared Dove** (Rollapadu, October 10, 2019)

Order: Columbiformes
Family: Columbidae
Genus: *Streptopelia*
Species: *S. decaocto*
Size: 32 cm

Description & distribution: A medium-sized dove, the Eurasian Collared Dove is pinkish-grey or buff-grey overall, with the upperparts being slightly darker than the underparts. It has a blue-grey underwing patch which is visible in flight. The main diagnostic feature is the white-edged black half-collar that goes around the back of the neck. The legs are short and red, bill is black and irises are deep reddish-brown (although difficult to see from a distance, as it is a narrow rim around the black pupils). There is a narrow bare ring around the eye, white in the nominate and yellow in the sub-species *S. d. xanthocycla* (which also has a darker grey head and darker pink underparts). Tail feathers are buff-grey above, and dark grey with white tips below. The sexes are alike. The juvenile is similar, but has an indistinct or poorly developed collar and brown irises. The specific name, *decaocto*, is said to come from the Greek word for 'eighteen', and is based on a mythological story about a servant girl who was paid only 18 coins a year, and was transformed by the gods into a dove to set her free from her sufferings.

The Eurasian Collared Dove is not migratory; however it is strongly dispersive and has extended its range across many parts of the world. Its original range, in late 19$^{th}$ century, was the warm temperate and subtropical regions of Asia, east from Turkey to southern China, and south through India till Sri Lanka. In the subsequent decades, it successfully colonized many parts of Europe, spreading rapidly across the Balkans, Germany, Great Britain, Norway and northern Russia, as well as southwest to the Canary Islands and northern Africa, from Morocco to Egypt, and east to central and northern China, and Japan. Besides, starting with a few pairs of escaped birds in the Bahamas in the early 1970s, it is now found across many parts of North America too.

Habitat & behaviour: In its original range, the Eurasian Collared Dove would typically inhabit semi-arid regions with scattered trees, mixed thickets or orchards. They have since adapted and are now almost completely an urban species, preferring spaces like urban gardens, parks, scrub patches, agricultural fields close to human habitation etc. The Eurasian Collared Dove is diurnal, and is often seen in pairs, either on a branch or foraging on the ground. It is gregarious, and groups of up to 10,000 birds have been reported, although smaller flocks of 10-50 birds are more common, especially at prime food-rich locations, like farms with threshing equipment, where split grain may be found, or outside grain stores. At times it has also been observed to demonstrate a fondness for sunflower seeds, even visiting feeders that stock them. Besides grain, its diet includes seeds from grasses and cereals, buds, berries, fruits, shoots, insects and other invertebrates. It is generally peaceful, even feeding in mixed flocks without incident, but may occasionally turn aggressive towards other species. It is one of the few species that can drink water 'head down', submerging their bills and sucking up water as through a straw. Its flight is fast and direct, with clipped wingbeats. Its usual call is a harsh, screeching *hah-hah*, especially in flight just before landing, or a monotonous *krou-koou-kou* repeated many times, while the song is a cooing *goo-GOO-goo*. When excited they may also utter a rapid and nasal *kwourrr*.

Nesting: The Eurasian Collared Dove breeds around the year if food is abundant, though rarely in winter in areas like Europe that have severe winters. The male engages in a mating display which, like most pigeons, includes a rapid, almost vertical ascent followed by a long glide back to ground in a circle, with wings held back in an inverted V below the body, and tail fanned. Nesting is usually close to human habitation, where food resources are easily available and there are trees for nesting. Nests are almost always within 1km of inhabited buildings. The nest is made of sticks, and 3-4 broods per year are usual (though up to 6 broods per year have been recorded). The usual clutch consists of 2 white eggs. Parental duties are shared by both parents. Instead of insects, which most species feed their chicks to meet their protein needs, the Eurasian Collared Dove gives its chicks a fat- and protein-rich 'crop milk', a whitish fluid which comes from liquid-filled cells that slough off the lining of the crop, a portion of the esophagus.

Local name: The Eurasian Collared Dove is known as *'Dhor fakhta', 'Parki', 'Panduk'* or *'Gugi'* in Hindi, *'Pedda bella guwa'* in Telugu; *'Pottanchangali'* in Malayalam, *'Kalli pura'* or *'Sambal pura'* in Tamil, *'Kukil'* in Kashmiri, *'Par ghughu'* in Bengali, *'Ghuggi'* in Punjabi and *'Dhol holo'* in Gujarati.

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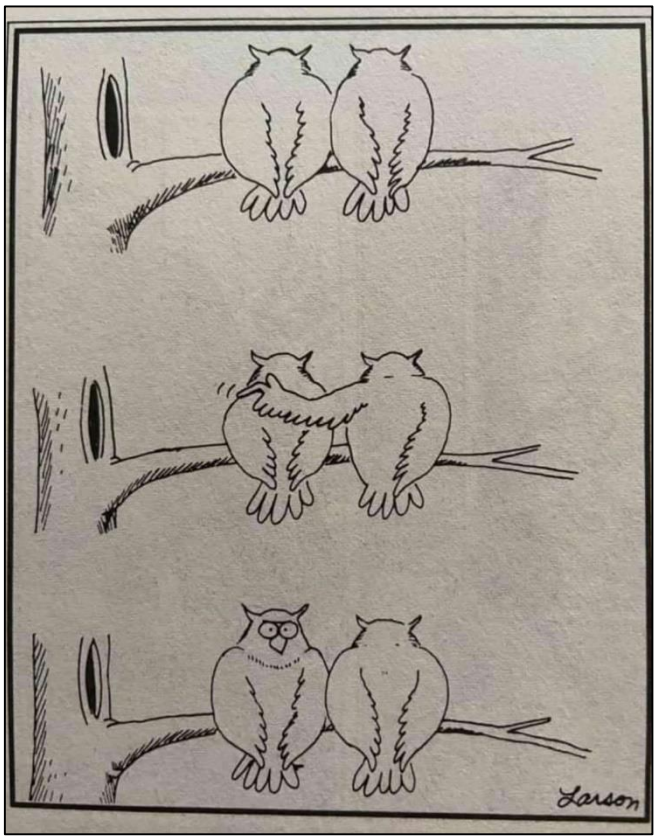
## Bird Humour

Umesh Mani




(From Instagram, November 16, 2021)

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